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—Cora Twohig-Moengangongo
Theologian, Independent Scholar
Toronto, Ontario

Foundations of Spirituality

The Human and the Holy:
A Systematic Approach

Carla Mae Streeter, OP



A Michael Glazier Book

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*To Tad, Bob,
Margaret, and Suzanne,
my mentors.*

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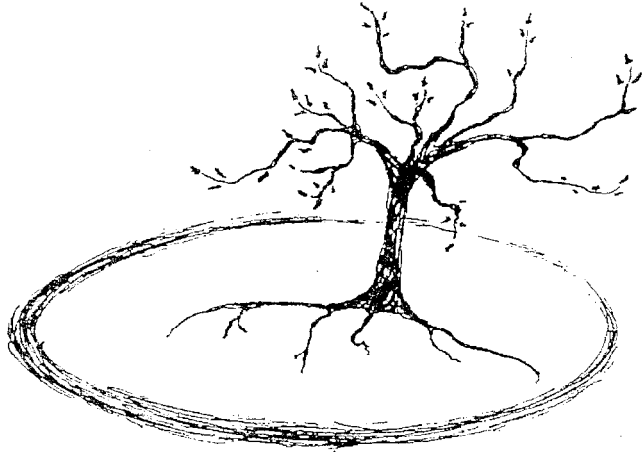
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Imagine a circle traced on the ground,
and in its center a tree sprouting. . . .
So think of yourself as a tree
made for love and living only by love. . . .
The circle in which this tree's root, your love,
must grow is true knowledge of yourself,
knowledge that is joined to me,
God,
who like the circle have neither beginning nor end.
You can go round and round within this circle,
finding neither end nor beginning,
yet never leaving the circle.



—Catherine of Siena, *The Dialogue* (New York: Paulist, 1980), 41.
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Contents

Acknowledgments xi

Introduction: What Is Spirituality? xiii

A Simple Definition xiv

Taking the Human Seriously xvi

When God Comes Courting xviii

Transformation of the Human xix

Chapter One: The Context for a Study of Spirituality 1

Spirituality and the Sciences 1

A Second Axial Shift? 3

What Kind of Interiority? 6

What Anthropology Is Needed? 9

A New Look at Humanness 14

Rethinking Human Anthropology 14

A Revised Anthropology 15

A Functional Perspective 17

The Soul as Measure of the Culture 18

The Relational Links 20

A Blessed Accountability 21

Measuring the Culture 22

Summary 23

Chapter Two: Spirituality as a Universal Phenomenon 25

An Experience and a Study 25

Clarifying Development Terms 26

Religion 26

Holiness 27

Historical Sketch	28
Then and Now	28
In Between	29
New Wine	30
Spirituality and Theology	30
A Troubled Marriage	30
Divorce	30
Reconciliation and Renewal	31
Spirituality as a Discipline	34
The Method Used in This Study	35
Summary	36

Chapter Three: The Distinctness of Christian Spirituality 38

A Communal/Relational Presence	39
An Incarnational/Integrative Presence	42
A Sacramental/Liturgical Presence	44
Summary	47

Chapter Four: The Anthropological Foundation 48

The Human Organism	48
Energy	50
Tension	51
Sexuality	53
The Human Psyche	56
Psychic Functions	56
Emotion	57
Psychic Scarring	58
The Human Spirit	59
The Apex	61
Experiencing	62
Understanding	63
Judging	64
Deciding	65
Vectors, Biases, and Imperatives	66
Summary	70

Chapter Five: The Divine Foundation 72

Total Reality 72

Energy and Grace-Life 75

Theological Virtue 78

Conversion and Further Transformation 81

Cardinal Moral Virtue 84

Love's Discretion: Prudence 86

Love's Fairness: Justice 87

Love's Courage: Fortitude 87

Love's Moderation: Temperance 88

Gifts of the Holy Spirit 90

In Cognitive Operation: Wisdom, Understanding,
and Knowledge 91

In Evaluative/Decisional Operation: Counsel and Piety 91

In Spontaneous and Considered Emotion: Fear of the Lord
and Fortitude 92

Summary 92

Chapter Six: The Beautiful Human Being 95

Naming the Beauty: In the Human 95

Knowing the Beauty: Fruits and Beatitudes 98

Nourishing the Beauty: Forgiveness and Prayer 106

Summary 109

Conclusion 111

Diagrams 113

General Bibliography 116

Index 128

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Carla Mae Streeter, OP
Aquinas Institute of Theology
St. Louis, Missouri
2012, Fiftieth Anniversary of the Second Vatican Council

What Is Spirituality?

It's no secret—the search is on. TV talk shows, the *New York Times*' best-seller book lists, enneagram workshops—spirituality is *in*. Why does this topic hold such a fascination for us? Do we have a hunch that this thing called “spirituality” may be key to the healing of our American soul? What is it we are looking for? What *is* spirituality?

America is home to many faith traditions. Because we fear that any one tradition will take over our national soul (e.g., Islamophobia), we tend to privatize religion. In doing so, we domesticate it, relegating religion to our private lives, where it cannot be held publicly accountable. It is our own personal business. Because religion causes arguments, it is best left alone. But should it be? Religious traditions are one thing, but deep within them lies the heart of the matter. Churchgoer or not, deep within each human being radiates the spirituality that is mine just because I am a human being. I am a *spiritual* being. But what does this mean? How can we talk about it? It is spirituality that shines out from the lantern of any faith tradition on the lamp stand of home or business. It shines out or is cloaked even in the rejection of any faith tradition, for it is the spiritual person who is doing the rejecting.

What is this vital yet evasive reality? I suggest that the core of spirituality is the ache of human longing. We long for intimacy. We long to be connected with what matters, and so we make decisions to go after what we think will satisfy that longing. Frail as we are, we seek out intimacy with the Holy while being terrified it might consume us. We have a hunch that contact with the Holy will call us out of our pettiness

Much of the content of this introduction can be found in my article “What Is Spirituality?,” *Review for Religious* 56:5 (September–October, 1997): 533–41, which can be accessed, along with the entire collection of *Review for Religious*, at <http://www.jesuitsmissouri.org/review/welcome.html>.

and self-interest, so deep down we fear it. But we long for intimacy with the human too. So pressing is this longing that we can manipulate and abuse each other in trying to satisfy it. Yet when we hurt, our hearts long to be comforted by a genuine caring presence, human or divine.

A Simple Definition

I propose that spirituality is *real presence*. It is being real, or fully human, and being really present—to myself, others, nature, the cosmos, the Divine. Said rather tritely, it is being *all there* wherever *there* happens to be. Someone's spirituality is the tone he or she brings when entering a room, an encounter, a project, a relationship. It is the summation of what we call sensitivity, intelligence, character, personality, human development, holiness, approach, social skills, or the lack of any or all of these, depending on maturity. Spirituality cannot be reduced to any of these any more than our presence can be reduced to our psychology, religion, or interpersonal skills. Spirituality is the tone of the self. Its beauty is being really *real*, genuinely present to any person or event in which I find myself. By its very nature, even if I don't intend it, this innate spirituality of mine points to the Holy. It is something pointing beyond my human limits, something transcendent, even if I reject the existence of such a reality.

The gift of real presence is received from another. When did you last receive it? Was it when you held your new smiling grandchild for the first time and said those wonderfully silly things grandparents say to new babies? Did it come to you at the precise moment when that little round face broke into a toothless grin? Maybe it was when your husband held you and let you cry when word came that your dad had breathed his last. Or maybe it was the way the love of your life took your face in her hands and kissed your eyes.

How can we tell if we're really *all there*? Someone who is really present is very attentive to people and to things going on. They are *with it*. They notice things. Then they begin wondering about them. They ask good questions, not questions that are smart-alecky or manipulative. They want the facts, the truth about what is going on around them. Once they know, they take a stand based on careful judgments or conclusions they have reached. They have opinions about things, and strong convictions. People who are really present are not *closed*. If you give them new data, they will consider changing their opinion, respecting the new truth offered them—but they will do so carefully.

Then these folks act. They move on what they know. They live out their convictions, in contrast to folks who might know a lot but do little about it. Finally, folks who are really present are people in love. They have been grasped by love, human or divine, and it makes them different. People who are in love are different from those who are not. People who are religiously in love move with respect on the earth and among people. They experience a longing for what is just, what is good, what is true, and what is holy. Their spiritual hunger is similar to a starving person in search of food.

Each religious tradition clothes this kind of presence with its own distinct manifestations. For Christians, the presence they bring to the human community is garbed in Christic homespun. Jesus of Nazareth is the text from which we come to know what God is really like and what we are to be like in relation to this Mystery. From his real presence among us historically we learn to be authentically *communal*, genuinely *incarnational*, and enamored of the *sacramental* nature of all of creation. These three publicly observable characteristics signal the identity of mainline Christians of various denominations worldwide. The proportion of these characteristics varies with differing denominations, due in large part to history and belief.

The *communal* nature of Christianity reveals a *we*-consciousness over and above a *me*-consciousness. Christianity shares this characteristic with the Judaic and Islamic traditions, the other two Religions of the Book, but the Christian lens will interpret its distinct communal identity with specific language: *unity in the risen Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit*. This communal characteristic is a counter-check on a rugged individualism.

The *incarnational* characteristic of Christian presence in the world will show itself publicly through an insistence that the human be taken very seriously in its free response to the Divine. Because the Holy wedded itself to humanness in the person of Christ Jesus, the Christian learns that the Holy will be found in the human as a partner for the healing of the world. As a result, a genuine Christian spirituality will need to deal seriously with human brokenness, abuse, and oppression. This incarnational aspect of Christian spirituality, when properly understood and taken seriously, prevents an escape into pietism and the “grin and bear it” posture of a pie-in-the-sky religiosity.

The *sacramental* aspect of Christian spirituality or presence is a direct outcome of the communal and incarnational characteristics. Because we are communal and in touch with the human, we discover

that we are bonded to the entire cosmos and to the very heart of matter. As science continues to reveal the interconnectedness of all of matter, this discovery enhances the sacramental characteristic of Christian spirituality in a very deep way. The sacramental sense begins with all of created reality. Matter is revelatory of the Holy. As revelatory, it is a source of joy and celebration. From this realization comes worship in its various forms in the Christian community. Among some Christians this celebration is quite reserved and muted; among others it is exuberant and rich. Sacraments reveal a love affair with the earth, with smells and bells, water and oil, incense and salt, candles and color. Christians cannot shake the marvel of the marriage of God with humanness in the incarnation or ignore the fact that DNA and all the elements of the periodic table have had a part to play in the wedding.

Taking the Human Seriously

Even though spirituality can manifest itself in distinct religious ways, it shows itself mainly in the ordinary ebb and flow of everyday life. It walks around in jeans and sunglasses. It shows up at the bank, the supermarket, and the board meeting. It is what being human is all about. The human being is a marvel of biology. Unfortunately, we think about our biological *organism* most when we go to the doctor because something isn't working right. But we are far more than physicality. We have a *psyche*.

The human psyche is not a *thing* or a *part* of being human. It is an energy field that permeates our physicality and what we will identify as our distinctly human *spirit*. We are a bundle of psychic energy. This energy is more and more understood today through the science of psychology. It is a vital *life force* that orchestrates our cell division, our metabolism, and our mental health. In addition to being pure energy, it takes the form of emotion, imaging, fantasy, and imagination.

Psychic energy can take the form of powerful *motors* we call emotions. These motors are revved up by our psychic capacity to image things, to fantasize and imagine. This energy field is deeply seated throughout our physical organism through our neurological system. The psyche draws from our physical sensations and experiences, is the seat of deep feeling and affectivity, and has everything to do with the tone of our spirituality. In the usual triad of *body, mind, and spirit*, it is sorely neglected until, unfortunately, we may need clinical therapy. The psyche and its energy field are shared to a great extent with the

animal realm. Yet there is still more to being human than biology and psychology.

If the psychic dimension of the human is shared in common with many animals, what really makes us distinctly human? We are obviously more than our emotions and our imaginations. What precisely are the functions of the human *spirit*? The human spirit operates in ways we can identify as more specifically *spiritual* rather than merely *psychic*. Again, function holds the clues to the distinctions we need. The human spirit has the capacity to *question*. We might say, then, that questioning is one of the most basic spiritual functions. We ask questions about our health, our house, the car, the cat, the children. Questions pop up about the Holy. I want to know how this One relates to me and those I love. We might say that the capacity to wonder, to inquire, to question, to want to know, as well as our awareness of wanting to know, is evidence of something more than raw psychic energy. It is empirical evidence for the distinct operations of the human spirit. But there is more.

We are most human by our capacity to *think* and *choose*. To think, we need to draw from the data of our senses and from the data that consciousness stores and presents us and that a psychic feeling memory preserves for us. When we are *conscious* we become *aware* of all this data. We question data to arrive at an understanding of it. We then question whether our understanding of it is true or not. Once we intelligently question and settle on answers, psychic energy with its images and emotions comes flooding back into consciousness. It influences us. We weigh what, if anything, we intend to do about what we know. Motivated, we lean toward a decision in line with our values. This activity also reveals further functions of the human spirit: spiritual activity. In the past we called it “evaluating” or “willing.” We decide and we choose. Then we do this or that. Or if we are not attending to our emotions and not asking enough questions, we arrive at half-truth conclusions and make decisions that ruin our lives, injure ourselves or others, or make us look ridiculous. These operations—attentive awareness and wonder, questioning for understanding, judging the facts, and deciding—are the distinct functions of the human spirit. As far as we know, our pets do not function in this way. It will be these operations, then, that the Holy will be aiming at to influence and deal with us in the context of our human freedom. We provide an X factor. The Holy will engage us no matter how we fill that in.

These distinctions provide a certain new clarity about what we mean by the human *soul*. When I use the term “body,” I will mean

the *physical and psychic functions* operating in the human person. By “soul” I will mean *psychic energy plus evidence of the distinct functions of the human spirit*. When psychic energy is operating biologically, it directs my digestion. When it operates emotionally, it curbs my anger. When psychic energy becomes conscious in the operations of experiencing, understanding, judging, and deciding, we have soul activity. This is what is distinctly human, and it is this human that either is or is not in relation to the Divine.

The relationship of the human to the Holy is what I will mean by the term “holiness.” Such a relationship can be implicit or explicit. Human is what we are. We may either be intentionally in relationship with the Mystery that is beyond ourselves or choose to ignore it. Whichever we choose, it is the human in its totality, *organism, psyche, and spirit*, that will do the choosing. This choice will contribute to the type of human presence we are identifying with spirituality. One’s spirituality will be undeveloped, developing, or mature. This will be real regardless of one’s chosen religion and despite any amount of denial. Clarifying these terms, even redefining them, will enable us to take the human quite seriously as we make day-to-day choices. Then we will be ready to consider spirituality as the distinct human presence brought to our relationship with the Holy in the unique tradition we identify as Christian.

When God Comes Courting

Wondrous is the human being that the Holy woos into holiness. Holy or not, the human is still spiritual because it functions spiritually, even if in defiance of God. But when the total human enters into relationship with God, we can expect the goose bumps intimacy brings. Holy women and men are embodied spirits who are in love with God. They have been grasped by divine Love and want to know what to do and what not to do. They are first of all in a *relationship*. Then they often seek out others to travel with, and Christians call this community of pilgrims “church.”

This text will reflect on how the Holy comes to meet the human, or said another way, how the Holy works with this physical, psychic, and spiritual person. God works with precisely what God has made, enhancing it rather than overriding or disposing of it. The basic premise of this book is that every person is called to holiness. Holiness comes about through the relationship of the human with the Divine. Holiness is a divine summons heard and responded to by a *human* being.

This relating will involve physical, psychic, and spiritual response. So far we have paid attention to the human partner in this relationship. We have named the dimensions of the human as physical, psychic, and spiritual. What can we say of the Divine?

How does God engage the human? To search this out, Christians begin by watching Jesus of Nazareth. We watch the one in whom the human/divine union was complete, and we are amazed. To our surprise, his humanness is whole, complete, beautiful, and transformed in what we have come to know as *resurrection*—all of this is a result of contact with the Divine. This “show and tell” is important for us. It calms our fears about getting too close to God. Humanity has had a clear fear in history that if we get too close to God, we will be destroyed. In the man Jesus we are shown that humanness touched by God ends up being *transformed*, not destroyed.

The history of spirituality and the lives of mystics and theologians have much to tell those who study spirituality. Their lives reveal experiences, and some even try to talk about what they have experienced. Account after account reveals the Holy approaching the human like a beggar, hat in hand. There is a knock on the door of the heart. If the human so much as inquires, the Holy, present always at the depth of the soul and keeping the human in existence, enters into conscious awareness. It is one thing to be sustained by God and quite another *to become aware* that this Holy One has come calling, seeking a relationship. Religious experience influences our perspective. The presence of the Holy has entered our horizon of awareness. Our horizon has been changed, and the Guest becomes a reference for choice and behavior. We question and seek to understand what has happened. Religious conversion has begun, and for such a person God can no longer be ignored or shooed off like a pesky fly. God stands at the door of the soul and waits. This self-gift of God in friendship and mercy is called grace.

Transformation of the Human

The Divine comes bearing gifts. For the psyche there is longing now for nothing less than God. The object of the psychic emotion of hope is now nothing less than the Divine. What is now the *theological virtue of hope* builds on our psychic emotion of hope. Theological hope is a desire, an ache born of divine Love, that transforms human longing, stopping now at nothing less than God. Its source and object, *the Father* at the heart of the triune Mystery, is the hiddenness of God

from which the longing springs. A knowing born of the same divine Love transforms the understanding and judgment. Such knowing, coming from loving, is called *faith*, and its source and object is the Divine revealing itself in the Word, from whence it comes. Rooted now in the Father, with the capacity to know now enlightened by the Word, the human also is given the capacity to evaluate and choose out of the very love that is at the heart of God. The Spirit's gift is *charity*, that active, dynamic, self-giving love that catches up the human emotion of love and changes its final goal. It now settles for nothing less than God. These three powers for human activity, called "theological virtues," seed the human with capacities beautiful to see in action. The change we call "conversion" has begun.

The change has immediate results on how one makes choices. *Moral* conversion is a shift from choosing short-term satisfaction to making choices based on long-term good. Our circle of concern expands beyond the usual self-interest. *Psychic* conversion may appear. It begins to dissolve the scar tissue of the psyche, the result of trauma and stored-up pain. Love can call us from this bondage, and therapy is often the scissors that cut the dead scar tissue away. Religious, moral, and psychic conversion—the Holy, like some housekeeper with a one-track mind, cleans out the human temple and begins the healing that will make its presence in the world different.

The most difficult change of all comes in knowing oneself—knowing one has not been attentive or intelligent in asking sufficient questions and as a result has arrived at rash judgments and regrettable decisions. Knowing how one's own consciousness works is *intellectual* conversion, and it is a far cry from replacing a few pieces of conceptual furniture. It is knowing how one knows and when one doesn't. This conversion means being aware of my awareness, understanding what it means to understand, and knowing how my judgment settles which understanding is correct. It means listening to my own emotions and how they influence my choices to act or not to act. Intellectual conversion is taking stock of the operations of my human spirit and coming to know how to cooperate in the building up of my own soul. Intellectual conversion puts us in charge of our own house. It calls us to accountability for our own human operations or for our own neglect of them to settle for acting less than human. It is an authentic self-knowledge and does not come cheaply. To engage it, one needs to make one's own interiority the object of evaluation. It is self-initiated interior accountability. Once admitted into consciousness, the presence of the Holy will

do exactly what that presence did for Jesus in his humanness: bring it to utter fullness, completion, and beauty.

How do we know this is happening? We know because there is *evidence*. This evidence appears as repeated patterns of human behavior begin to manifest themselves. We call these patterns “virtues.” We have already identified the first three: faith, hope, and charity. Believing, hoping, and loving transform the very *nature of the human*, orienting it to the Divine. As the human begins to act out of this new orientation, qualities begin to show in the humanness itself. Four qualities begin to show up in the ordinary ebb and flow of daily living. Their classic names are “prudence,” “justice,” “fortitude,” and “temperance.” Called “cardinal moral virtues,” their object is the beautiful, balanced, functioning human being in its own right, informed by a gracious love.

Prudence is love’s discretion. It marks the converted person as levelheaded, credible, and full of common sense; the person weighs the appropriateness of thinking and acting in light of what has become a primary love. *Justice* is love’s fairness. In all dealings with others, respect and consideration are shown as one would expect the same for oneself. As prudence sets the tone in the intelligence, so justice sets the tone in the capacity to choose. In the face of racism, sexism, nationalism, and the political and economic self-interest evident in the daily news, the just person will have nothing to do with behavior outside the aura of the primary love that now directs one’s life. Injustice or oppression of others rouses one from silence to a healthy expression of indignation. *Fortitude* is love’s courage. It prompts one to take risks whenever one’s primary love is at stake. This most personal love, this relationship with the Holy, becomes the strong rudder, guiding the unflagging energy needed for human affairs in the face of the daily challenges that can wear us down and make us act small. *Temperance* is love’s moderation. Its first goal is to temper the “skin hunger” that would have us give free rein to use another person for our own satisfaction. Temperance brings love’s strong hand to the more physical aspects of human life. It draws the entire body into the service of love. The temperate person is wonderfully sensual, delighting in the beauty of the human form, a beautifully served meal, fine wine, lovely music, and the rich colors of a delicately designed room. He or she knows how to fill life with beauty and finds it everywhere.

As this study unfolds, other familiar subjects that have been a part of Christian spirituality will enter into the discussion. What are the *gifts of the Holy Spirit*? How do they differ from the theological and moral

virtues so basic to conversion? What do we mean when we speak of the *fruits of the Spirit*? How do they differ from the gifts? What are *charisms*, and what place do they have in personal spiritual development and service to the Christian community? What place does *prayer* have, and what does it mean? What is the importance of *forgiveness*, so prominent in Christian calls to conversion? Finally, what are the *Beatitudes*, and where do they fit in this array of wonders the Divine works in the human heart?

Our goal is to catch a glimpse of a real presence in our world—yours and mine. We are human beings, made so by the Mystery that has formed us out of nothing but love. The full response we will examine will flesh out a spirituality that we will deliberately call “incarnational,” a bonding of the human with the Holy that is pervasive and entire. The world is indeed in search of the *real thing*. As we walk among our family members, friends, or those struggling with illness and death, we can settle for no less.

The Context for a Study of Spirituality

Spirituality and the Sciences

Many are convinced we have lost our souls. Others hold that science has replaced our souls, like motors in machines. I'm going to side with neither. Instead, I'm going to pose a different consideration: *What in us is asking the question?* I propose it is our souls in search of meaning. I suggest the soul is alive and well. *What we need to do is rethink what it is.* If the real question is "What is the soul?" we are hard pressed today to explain what it is that we are talking about. For some it is a mysterious entity that pops in and out of the body in successive lives. For others it is a unique creation at conception, integral to each person, and thus the form of the transformed body after death.

As the *form* of the body, the soul, for Christians, is not complete without the body, for the body is its expression. In the past we believed that when the body died, the soul lived on somehow, somewhere, and there was the impression that the body would catch up with it later. We do not need to explore the classic Platonic or Aristotelian explanations

These reflections are an adaptation of a paper that appeared in the proceedings of the Institute for Theological Encounter with Science and Technology (ITEST) workshop on "Advances in Neuroscience: Implications for Christian Faith" (September 2002). It was published as "Organism, Psyche, Spirit—Some Clarifications: Toward an Anthropological Framework for Working with the Neuro-Psycho-Sciences," in *Advances in Neuroscience: Implications for Christian Faith* (St. Louis, MO: ITEST / Science Press, 2003), 51–71. It is used with permission.

2 Foundations of Spirituality

of the human soul here. Rather, we want to inquire into *how* these ancient explanations have developed into nuanced understandings of the human being. Plato taught that souls preexist. Aristotle, adopted by Thomas Aquinas for use in his own anthropology, taught that the soul is the *form* of the body, and in humans that form is intelligent and capable of free choice. But what is this form of which we speak? What *is* the soul?

Today anyone who asks what the soul is can easily be dismissed. For some, psychology has disposed of the soul. Unless a clear place for the soul is presented in the total overall anthropology of the human being, the concept can be simply rejected. Where is it? What is it? What does it have to do with the brain? These are just some of the questions that arrive with the very mention of the word. Former classical answers can be given, but for many, their minds in this time of psychological exploration will press further: *Why* is that so? *How* is that so? For many *that* it is so is no longer enough. We want to know *how*. We need a new understanding of the meaning of a reality we consider constitutive of being human.

The question of the soul is only the beginning. From our Christian perspective other questions present themselves. What is distinctly human in what we discover about the soul? What does the Divine have to do with the soul? Is the soul natural or supernatural? Does it belong to us as humans, or is the soul something of God in us? What exactly happens when grace interpenetrates human consciousness, bringing with it the array of virtues we have named theological and moral? What really are grace and virtue? What is the meaning of the grace-human interaction? Is there even such an interaction, and if so, how do we account for it? We will attempt to address these questions. The emphasis as we begin will be on the anthropological, but the anthropological for the Christian is not complete without addressing its relation to the Divine. Why doesn't the old static concept we have had about the soul still work? Is there another way to think and speak about it? What is a more inclusive framework for understanding the human? Why is the conventional triad of *body, mind, and spirit* inadequate? Is our suggestion, that *organism, psyche, and spirit* replace this popular triad, more adequate? Why? Do we have to learn a new language to speak about what we have called the "human soul"? In this first chapter we will begin the exploration, asking the honest questions posed in our time. It is to the distinctness of this time in history and thought that we turn now in our exploration.

A Second Axial Shift?

We can trace the term “axial shift” to the German existentialist philosopher Karl Jaspers. In his work *The Origin and Goal of History*, Jaspers suggests there is an axis on which the whole of human history turns. Jaspers locates this shift or turn of human consciousness to the period between 800 and 200 BCE.¹ The period in history prior to this shift might be called the primal cosmological period. This earlier use of the term *cosmological* refers to the early dawn of consciousness when the human perceived itself as a pawn of nature. The frequent victims of flood, windstorm, fire, and earthquake, humans worshiped these elements in some primal sense, similar to taking out an insurance policy. This early self-awareness is caught artistically still today in some forms of Asian art. A majestic mountain, a magnificent tree meet the viewer’s eye, and on closer look, a tiny figure can be detected climbing the mountain. Water, air, fire, and earth, the four basic elements, play a large part in creating a sense of the self as subservient to the unrestricted power of nature.

This primal cosmological self-awareness does not come to an abrupt end with the year 800 BCE. Like a new dawning, the axial shift occurs gradually. The shift is a new awareness, and it consists in the exciting possibility that with some thought, humans can harness the powers of nature. Science, in its most primitive form, is born. Where flooding occurs, we can build housing on stilts. Where we observe fire, we can tend and contain it; observe the wind, build structures designed to withstand its power; observe animals, notice how they warn of pending earthquakes.

In addition to this scientific shift, there is a *moral* shift. Ritual in its exactness and conformity ruled the early cosmological period. If the ceremonial was done carelessly, the gods might get angry, and the entire nation would be punished. With the axial shift a new awareness dawns: perhaps the gods are angry *because of the way I treated my wife last night*. This new moral sense influenced religious practice. Religions

¹ See Bernard Lonergan, *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, vol. 4: *Collection*, ed. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988), 237–38; and *A Second Collection*, ed. William F. J. Ryan and Bernard J. Tyrrell (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1974), 226–27. See also Karl Jaspers, *Origins and Goals of History* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1953), 26; and Arnold Toynbee, *Mankind and Mother Earth: A Narrative History of the World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), 178.

4 Foundations of Spirituality

became organized to not only guide the ritual practice of their devotees but to shape their behavior once they left the temple or shrine.

What is interesting to note in this history is that every major religion and philosophy takes early form during this axial shift across the globe. Confucius appears in China; Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle appear in Greece; the Jewish prophets arise in ancient Israel; Zoroaster appears in Persia. In India the Hindu sacrificial fire-worship rituals of the Vedas give way to the Upanishads and the Epics. The Buddha emerges, pointing to an interior focus rather than to the ritual emphasis found in Hinduism at his time. Formal religion and science then arise together with the shift in human consciousness to analytical thinking and the evaluation of action. Critical thought that seeks not only to describe but to *explain* is born.

Gathering momentum by 200 BCE, the *anthropological* shift places the human being and its capacity for inquiry at center stage. With each passing century, cosmic mythology recedes more and more into the background. The thinking human male becomes the measure of all things. All religions and cultures are brought gradually under human control sociologically, politically, and economically. The history of the West is the record of this shift from the influence of the cosmos with its mysterious gods and God. The power of the human mind finally achieves “enlightenment” between 1730 and 1780. Reason and science reign supreme. What cannot be observed or understood by the human mind is relegated to the ancient realm of myth and thus rendered inconsequential and childish. Religion itself comes under this critical eye, and faith is considered by some as immature, the evidence of a mind not yet come of age, not yet ruggedly free of its dependent relationship upon the God of one’s childhood. Anthropological fixation on the human being seeks total independence and self-sufficiency, needing no one. For many, self-sufficiency and independence (not relationship and interdependence) become the epitome of what it means to be human.

In this self-absorption, rationalism and scientism reign supreme. For some the successes of the industrial age and the city-state with its political democracy or socialism become all the worship one needs. New technologies, so full of creativity and promise, are put into the service of a militarism the world had never imagined. Education aims at training minds to be scientifically sharp and efficient. The trained rational mind becomes the goal of state-sponsored education. Psychology is born as a new discipline, moving beyond the medical field into the realms of emotion, trauma, and mental illness. As a result of its

growing isolation, the human becomes more and more fragmented. The brain takes control, and anything beyond the measurable is dismissed as arbitrary and undependable. Empathy, affectivity, and compassion recede into the cultural background.

In the late nineteenth century the Catholic Church in particular reacted to this state of affairs both positively and negatively. On the positive side, the great social encyclicals were written, sounding the clear call for the recognition of workers' rights. Negatively, the church regarded the shift to reason and self-sufficiency as a form of idolatry and assumed a public position of entrenchment with a denouncement of modern trends branded as "modernism." The extremities of anthropocentrism were grouped under this label of modernism and roundly condemned. With this condemnation both the wheat and the weeds, intertwined, came unavoidably under censure.

The twentieth century brought a time of shocking disenchantment and disillusion. Unchecked rationalism and scientism revealed a tragic underside. To the horror of the world, the two world wars revealed to us starkly where an unethical technology could lead. The death camps and Hiroshima and Nagasaki rose up as specters to haunt us. With instant media coverage, the world saw the carnage of Vietnam up close. A growing disgust with war was born. In the United States, conscientious objectors fled to Canada and burned draft cards. The ensuing years saw communism fall and the Berlin Wall crumble under the urgency of those seeking peace. The human idols of rationalism and scientism were showing they had clay feet, but there was no going back. Science and technology were here to stay. The only way was forward, using discernment and careful choice.

Some are convinced the worship of the mind has led to the loss of the soul in a rudderless postmodern relativism. But others are sensing that humankind is moving toward still-further development, that we are indeed on the cusp of a *second* axial shift in consciousness. This new cultural shift is again gradual, moving like a global thaw. The science of psychology has ushered in a shift to philosophical interiority, the exploration of the human subject in the intelligent operations of human consciousness. Human self-awareness has become the object of exploration. With the birth and unfolding of neuroscience, new boundaries have been crossed. The psychological sciences have begun to explore human consciousness, and the psyche in its healthy and unhealthy functioning has been the object of intense study. Psychology has also become aware of a threshold it is not able to cross: there is a depth of

mystery in the human that its pragmatic testing cannot measure. The term “spiritual,” until now used only in a religious context, began to be used in scientific parlance. Attention has turned to the exploration of *inner* space. Writers are suggesting that with this probing of the consciousness of the human subject, the second axial shift, the shift to *interiority*, has begun.

This new shift is not a return to the past, to the integrated medieval worldview of a unified sacred and secular. The shift to interiority is occasioned by desperation. It is prompted by the lonely howl of the human lost in the bottomless pit of its own limits. Crying for something more than human finitude, we stand like children looking in horror at our smashed images of God in a heap on the floor. The concepts of God as avenger, monarch, and autocrat are lying smashed by historians, cultural anthropologists, and even some theologians. Stripped of the old notions of Ultimate Reality and not fitted with new ones, many feel lost, orphaned, and alienated from the religious images they had known from childhood and have nothing secure with which to replace them. A vacuum begs to be filled. If the God we thought we knew is dead, what is there to replace this central ground, distorted as it may have been? Since science and technology with its weaponry can destroy us, what can save us? For some the solution is obvious: we must save ourselves. What is there besides our own minds? Our science? Our cleverness? Our self-indulgence? The conclusion may be rash, but we cannot overlook the fact that this honest questioning might hold hope of a rediscovery of the Mystery of the Holy in a way we have never known it. Is it possible that the *way inward* holds hope of a new and vital knowledge of who the human being really is?

What Kind of Interiority?

We might ask what leads philosophers and cultural anthropologists to believe this shift is actually taking place and whether it is global in its extent. One indicator is the interest today in *spirituality* even while there is a growing dissatisfaction with institutionalized religion. If bookstores are any indication, the spirituality section today covers everything from tarot card reading and the Enneagram to Hildegard of Bingen and the Zen mystics. Spirituality is a major section of interest in the store. Academically, in philosophy there has been a subtle shift to the consciousness philosophers, those who take the turn to the subject seriously and are showing that this turn need not result in

Kantian subjectivism. Although the term “interiority” has a religious ring for some, the use of the term here refers to a shift to *philosophic* interiority, or the understanding of how we function in our human consciousness.

It cannot be assumed that the human cry rising from postmodern fragmentation is consciously religious. It is, however, a cry of the lost, the disconnected. The cult of the human has become a confinement in that very humanness. The cry is a cry from prison. The openness to the transcendent afforded in the past by religion has been lost. What happens to us when there is nothing beyond ourselves to relate to? Where does one begin to find oneself in relation to something ultimate in this state of affairs? The postmodern position that there is no ultimate *anything* leaves many empty. Is there nothing beyond ourselves? The way to freedom begins *in the very questioning* of where we find ourselves. Our age has been prone to being blinded by our own human accomplishments to the point of self-worship. The way out will begin with a proper reassessment of that same humanness—the human in relationship to *all* of reality: the cosmos, nature and the earth, other human beings, and the Divine. This is no pouring of new wine into old skins. New skins must be prepared to hold the new wine.

The turn to interiority can be a finding of oneself in total truth. It can be a coming home. It will require a step, a turning, a *conversion* many fear to take. The way has been pointed out by the precursors, the consciousness philosophers. Writers such as Gadamer, Habermas, and Apel have challenged us with the task of attending to how human consciousness deals with reality. They warn us that worldviews will remain an eclectic smorgasbord until we have attended to how the mind processes data, how it arrives at conclusions. They wrestle with the fact that truth seeking can become infested with bias. They tell us *that* truth seeking must be done. They do not tell us *how the consciousness functions* in order to do it.

One group of scholars has taken steps into this new uncharted territory. Led by the Canadian Jesuit methodologist Bernard Lonergan, a small band of philosophers, economists, scientists, and theologians has begun an exploration into *interiority analysis*. Put in simple terms, they make the operations of their own intelligence the object of scrutiny. They offer a theory of cognition arrived at empirically through critical self-observation. They seek to give an answer to the question “What am I doing when I am knowing?” To clarify what knowing really is, they attempt to chart empirically the active intelligence-in-operation

to determine its pattern of recurrent operations. Lonergan took his cue from his study of Aquinas. In question 84 of the *Summa*, Aquinas states that the intelligence can be known *only in its act*. Learning to attend to this action enables the thinker to arrive at *self-appropriation*, or a heightened awareness of whether one is authentically engaging the intelligence in all of its operations or selectively omitting some of those operations through bias. When this is done communally with others, mutual critique can bring about a high degree of accountability. The underlying premise in such activity is the conviction that real objectivity is arrived at only through authentic subjectivity.² Without the proper attention to the subject's operations, there can be no empirical accountability of how the intelligence is processing data. Discussion of "objectivity" without this can be illusory. Objective truth may be there, but the biased mind may never come to know it. Bias needs to be intelligently addressed and evaluated. Only with this kind of intentionality communally recognized can any level of accountability be claimed.

This shift to interiority calls for the *thematic objectification* of subjective operations. To thematize data is to put it in a conceptual form able to be scrutinized by others. The careful attentiveness to one's own conscious operations is new, and some dismiss the effort as obscurantist, labeling the scholars who attempt it as elite and obtuse. Incorrectly lumped with Transcendental Thomists,³ the work of these scholars is dismissed by some philosophers, theologians, and scientists who are puzzled by this turn to the subject to make its conscious operations clear. Rather than referring to a mere change of mental concepts, the term refers to giving an account of the operations involved in *how one knows*. It is an analysis of how consciousness itself functions cognitively.

Lonergan Centers have sprung up in Toronto, Santa Clara, Milwaukee, Boston, Dublin, Naples, Sydney, Mexico City, Tokyo, Manila, and Rome. Learning *the method* means coming to know how one's own consciousness works. Analyzing one's own interiority requires focused attention on the empirical operations of the consciousness as it functions. The understanding of this functioning then becomes the

² See one example of Lonergan's discussion of this in *Method in Theology* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1972), 265, 292.

³ Lonergan has his own comments on the labeling resulting from this lack of understanding. In a footnote on pp. 13–14 of *Method in Theology*, he distinguishes his work from that of Transcendental Thomists such as Otto Muck (*The Transcendental Method* [New York: Herder and Herder, 1968]).

key to understanding the way the intelligence works, whether to plan a vacation or to research the human genome. If we can envision a group of scholars attending to this process together in order to verify and nuance it, we have some understanding of what Lonergan intended. What he intended was interdisciplinary scholarship based on an empirical observation of how humans work when they come to *know* anything. In other words, the approach to transforming human culture is grounded in attending to the *method* of actual empirical and intelligent human operation and in being accountable for its understandings, judgments, and decisions.

What Anthropology Is Needed?

The usual categories of rational psychology will no longer be adequate to this task. Drawn from Aristotelian and Thomistic theories of human nature, these theoretical categories, though many of their insights are valuable and true, cannot be the starting place. The starting place is in empirical observation of the functioning human being and in giving an account of what is going on when the human comes to know anything. Does the same thing happen again and again? Is there a pattern that repeats itself? Can the operations be recognized and named? If the answer to these questions is yes, we are on our way to *grounding* whatever theory of knowing we propose, in language the scientifically trained mind can understand with us. An empirically based cognitional theory would underpin our epistemology, allowing scientists and theologians to talk to one another about the human being from an observable base. From such an empirical base one would give an account of human operation any scientist could follow, while the theologian might be questioning the activity of grace in the heart of the same human. They draw from different *data*, one from empirical human functioning, and the other from the impact of revelation provided by faith. The functioning human uses the same consciousness for both, and accountability can be asked whether or not he or she is a believer in the religious sense.

Lonergan calls the empirical process needed to ground a sound cognitional theory “interiority analysis.” It presupposes an accurate empirical charting of the operations of human cognition and identifies four main levels of operation: experience, understanding, judgment, and decision. The human operations that pertain to each of these levels are named, and a cyclic and recurrent pattern is charted. If Lonergan

is on to something, a new meaning has been found for the old adage “Know thyself.”

One way out of the sense of postmodern relativity would be to do an accountable self-appropriation. This means recognizing and naming one’s own cognitive functions. This attentive awareness and careful scrutiny of one’s own intellectual operations is necessary for the human to become accountable personally and communally in his or her search for the truth. Finding the full truth about the human would also mean the possibility of opening the human once again to its rightful place in the cosmos. This return would imply a reexamination of the *relationship* the human has with nature, with other human beings, and with the Divine. The truth needs to be sought without bias, but bias needs to be identified and named *communally*. Where does it function to block the operations of intelligence? But in addition to giving an account of how one reaches a judgment of truth, there will need to be an account of how we reach a judgment of *value*. It is value that motivates human choice. We need an anthropology that can adequately *explain how* we might address these questions.

The context of Western Christians has changed. As Christians we are no longer living in a cultural or religious ghetto. The media has opened us up to the reality of the global village. Considering an adequate anthropology for the work ahead of us requires that we see anthropology as pertaining to others as well as to ourselves. What do we find when we expand our horizon to a global perspective? We find that history and cultures have had much to do with the lenses we wear to try to understand.⁴ In the past we have narrowly concluded that our lens is the only lens. Our expanding worldview teaches us quickly how inadequate this view is. Those working with interiority analysis are convinced that cultural difference is compatible with the basic operations of human consciousness. They suggest that these operations are human and thus cross-cultural; their outer manifestations, however, are distinct to the cultures in which people live.

Is it possible for us to do the work of interiority explicitly from a faith perspective? Can anthropology, as it opens up in interiority analysis, hold insights for the incarnation itself? For Christians this

⁴For some of the reflections that follow regarding energy and East/West contrasts, I am indebted to Gerald May, MD, *Will and Spirit: A Contemplative Psychology* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1982), chapter 7, pp. 172–209.

mystery is the bridge⁵ reaching out to our humanness to connect us to the Divine. Work done in interiority analysis will impact not only our knowledge of ourselves but also our understanding of this central mystery. In what follows, we will be focusing on human anthropology using the approach of probing the intentionality operative in our human interiority. I want to make clear that the explorations into anthropology in what follows are not to be understood apart from this human-divine connection, even if at first we do not address the Divine directly.

If we are going to take the neurosciences seriously, for example, we are clearly addressing human anthropology. So, scientifically, where are we to begin? I suggest we begin with a very scientific term, the word “energy.” Much has been written about energy as a life force because it occurs in all living things and indeed because its different forms are observed through space exploration.⁶ But I would like to begin with a specific focused energy that, unlike light, electrical, and nuclear energy, has been researched very little. What is the nature of *love’s* energy? Since our earlier question was about what makes humans fully human, we need to focus our sights on the most human of our energies, the energy of love. Like a *basso continuo*, love is the distinct energy that not only influences the full flourishing of the human but provides for us in the human world a bridge to the realm of transcendence.

In a recent article, *The Christian Science Monitor* announced just such a pursuit.⁷ No longer satisfied with the “selfish gene” theory as the bottom line, scientists are undertaking an investigation into the nature of the energy of love and its expression. Alarmed by international violence and hate, bioethicist Stephen Post, who will head the new effort, believes we have no real alternative, considering the present state of the world. Reporter Jane Lampman claims the study reveals a shift within key disciplines from focusing on the negative in human

⁵ This is the image given by God to Catherine of Siena in her *Dialogue*. I recommend searching the index (p. 376) for the multiple uses of this powerful image (Catherine of Siena, *The Dialogue*, trans. Suzanne Noffke, OP [New York: Paulist, 1980]).

⁶ A recent work by an assistant professor of nursing in New York poses some interesting questions. The author, writing from a scientific point of view, is convinced that a careful study of energy will bring about the convergence of science and religion (Vidette Todaro-Franceschi, *The Enigma of Energy: Where Science and Religion Converge* [New York: Crossroad, 1999]).

⁷ See Jane Lampman, “Scientists Put Love under the Microscope,” *The Christian Science Monitor* 94:132 (June 3, 2002): 1 and 4.

nature to taking a hard look at what makes humans thrive. Located at a prominent medical school, Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, the new Institute for Research on Unlimited Love begins its work with an initial endowment of four million dollars. The effort will engage disciplines from psychology and human development to public health and medicine, neuroscience, sociology, and evolutionary science. It will also explore the links between religion, spirituality, and human behavior. Why might this be of interest to us as scientists, as theologians, as spiritual guides?

Several traditions in both the East and the West hold that the different manifestations of love share a common ground of energy and that this common energy is the basic life force of the universe. Gerald May, MD, proposes that the different manifestations of love are expressions of a root spiritual energy that is *processed and differentiated* through the human psyche. May calls this root energy “agape” and likens it to a base metal, “irreducible and unadulterated.” Taken as fragments of energy into the psyche, it becomes mixed with “certain aspects of self-definition” appearing “in conscious human experience.”⁸ Could it be that it runs on a type of created energy that has as its source an energy that is an unconditional type of loving? Would this energy have a relation to what we identify as the Divine? In this energy source, is *everything* divine, as some Eastern traditions suggest, but with the distinctions we in the West want to hold?

As Christians we believe that God is personified love and that this love is the source of all created reality. What might this have to do with this energy?

As hidden *source*, this love we call “God” is called “Father.” This love expresses itself and so is also a “Word.” This same love as God’s active self-giving we call “Holy Spirit.” We teach that Christians will be known by an agapic or self-giving love manifested in our behavior toward one another, and that this charity is a theological virtue created in the human soul to enable us to love with God’s own love. Human love can become deformed, as May suggests. But when human love is interpenetrated with this divine energy as charity, there is a godly influence on our human loving. Can the dynamic agapic energy May is referring to as root cause be the uncreated Spirit of God as named by

⁸ Gerald May, “Energy: The Unifying Force,” in *Will and Spirit: A Contemplative Psychology* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1982): 172.

Christians? Does this *dynamis*, or active love, create in the human a conscious energy that can communicate and influence the wider world? Does the incarnation of the Word create a bridge for divine love to be in direct contact with the human through the sacred humanity of the Word? Is the human an instrumental cause of the transformation of human culture through the energy of love?

In both Eastern and Western thought frames, energy of some kind is fundamental to being. Western physics sets itself to find a unified field theory that could identify all creation as energy. May states that for Freud it is libido arising from the “biological substrata” of the id, the anatomical and physiological foundations of unconscious motivation. W. R. D. Fairbairn, in contrast, holds the “object relations” theory of personality. Here the ego has its own intrinsic energy, also called “libido.” Behavioral psychology views psychic energy as the simple physical product of cellular oxidation. Most Western theories presuppose that psychic energy originates in and is limited to the individual human brain and body.⁹

The East, and Asian thought in particular, does not make a distinction between psychology and spirituality. As a result, the East poses the existence of a universal energy that manifests itself mentally and spiritually in people and also in the physical workings of the cosmos as a whole. Known as *chi* in China, *ki* in Japan, *sakti* or *kundalini* in Sanskrit, this universal energy is understood to be manifested everywhere and not to be limited to expression in human consciousness. This energy is understood as a basic universal life force, undetermined and ambiguous in itself.

Western thought, shaped by the rational and scientific approaches of the Enlightenment, identifies the *human as the origin* of this energy. The East, its insights flowing from more contemplative traditions, maintains that whatever the physiological point of origin might be, the energy manifested in consciousness originates first as raw, undifferentiated energy *outside of the human*. Rather than settle for the ambiguity of the Far East or the anthropocentrism of the West, the Christian suggests yet another option. Could it be that the power of God *creates* life energy in the universe, each creature manifesting an energy proper to its being? Why is it important to clarify these viewpoints? The role of

⁹ May holds that even Jung in his reference to the collective unconscious understands psychic energy as originating in the human. See May, *Will and Spirit*, 341n7. For the comparison of Eastern/Western points of view, see *ibid.*, 173–77.

the human must be given its due, neither deified nor dismissed, and the *relationship* of the Divine to the human in its operations needs to be clarified. The Christian position is a *both/and*, not an *either/or*, solution. The human functions as human, and that functioning provides the data science needs. The Divine relates to the human as source of life and creator of human energy. The relationship is one of the empowerment of what is already there, not its replacement. This is the clarification we need in order to take a position on the functioning of the prime center of human consciousness as it expresses itself, the human brain.

As Christians we hold that the parts of the human brain that seem to generate certain emotions¹⁰ are really acting as filters or suppressors of the psychic energy belonging innately to human beings. If this is possible, then the anatomical brain locations where emotion seems to originate are not actually the *generators* of the emotion but are merely the places where emotional energy is *mediated* into awareness. Neurochemical processes, then, would not be the source of emotional energy but would act instead as custom-designed filters, changing the energy's form and expression. The brain is a physical organ, a neurological network of synapses. The mind, however, refers to the spiritual capacity of the human to *sublate* or transpose brain events as a network of attentive, intelligent, reasonable, responsible, and loving events. In a respectful stance, this clarification might allow theology and science to converse and share insights.

A New Look at Humanness

Rethinking Human Anthropology

To suggest an anthropology more suited to this task, it becomes essential to ask what the basic dimensions of the human might be. Science in its exploration of the human genome has much to tell us of our physicality. Psychology and psychiatry continue to explore the marvel of the human psyche. Can we use interiority analysis to be more precise about what the human spirit is? Can we attempt to chart the anatomy of the human spirit? Is the human spirit synonymous with the soul? Is the human spirit natural or supernatural? What is the human spirit's relationship to the psyche? These are wonderful questions beg-

¹⁰ See, e.g., the work of Candace Pert in *Molecules of Emotion* (New York: Scribner, 1997).

ging honest answers. The description of the human in popular jargon is “body, mind, and spirit.” Is this adequate? Where are the emotions in such a description? What does each of the three words in the pop culture description refer to? With these questions before us, we will begin our exploration with a revised anthropology as the basis of the anthropological foundations of spirituality.

A Revised Anthropology

Returning to our starting point with energy, note first that the human being manifests energy in a distinctly human way. Most visible to the eye, our DNA takes form in what we will call the human “organism.” This dimension of ourselves is known not only by its visibility but by its distinct functions. The organism consists of a complexity of systems. We can identify many of these systems: circulatory, respiratory, lymphatic, digestive, reproductive, neurological, and so forth. The wonder of the function of the human organism is coming to the fore as science daily probes deeper into its intricacies. In keeping with our conviction that the human is grounded in the heart of God, the organism mediates the created energy proper to itself while remaining grounded in that creative power.

The example of the application of this faith conviction in classic theology is an understanding of God as the One who *is*. This Mystery, in which essence and existence are one, is said to bestow *being* on all creatures so that they can *be*. This would mean that the One who is, God, uses the ovum and sperm of our parents as instrumental causes to bring us to *be*. Their physicality, manifesting the energy of their human love and desire, enters into partnership with the Divine to cause another to *be*. In classical terminology, this is the primary efficient cause, God, creating in and through instrumental causes, namely, our parents.

Human consciousness, as it emerges from childhood awareness to a more mature self-reflection, begins to attend to two sources of data. The most common database for us is the data of sense provided through the human organism. We touch, smell, hear, taste, and see. By our five senses we glean information from our environment and surroundings. The second source of data is more subtle. It is the data of consciousness itself. As we grow, we become more and more *aware* that we are touching, smelling, hearing, tasting, and seeing.

By *attentiveness* we notice things. We attend to what our senses or consciousness is calling to our attention. We are attentive to external

data and to consciousness itself as simple *experience*. This primary experiential level is the level of awe, the simple contemplative experience of wonder—at the beauty of a sunset, at the face of a child, at the mystery of God. Lest this level of operation be quickly dismissed, I propose that it opens us to that mysterious psychic energy field that is the object of the psychological sciences. The *psyche* is the unconscious repository of sensitive feeling memories. From it spring dreams, imagining, and fantasy. It is in the hidden depths of the psyche that energy mysteriously gathers in intensity to be manifested as the eleven powerful human emotions.

A careful distinction needs to be made here. Psychic energy becomes *conscious* at what we will identify as the first level of the human spirit, that of experience. What this implies is that psychic energy is real but sometimes not noticed. It is *unconscious*. When we become aware of it, we speak of being *conscious* of it. This first level of conscious awareness is psychic energy functioning as the first level of the distinctive human *spirit*. The psyche is an energy field that stores the data of sense from physical functioning and also stores the data of consciousness from what will be going on in the operations of the human spirit. The psyche is thus distinct from the human spirit but not separate from it, distinct from the organism but not separate from it. It becomes important for us to identify the operations that belong not only to this first level of consciousness but to all the levels of the human spirit. Once we do this, we may be able to redefine what we mean by the *soul* with some reference to distinctive human function.

If the awareness of human experience identifies the first level of conscious operation, what drives the energy of the human spirit forward? I am going to suggest that it is *drawn forward*, that it is *lured*. The human spirit is curious. As if drawn by an unseen undercurrent, the consciousness longs to find out; it desires to understand. From first-level, simple awareness it moves to a new set of operations marked by *inquiry*. Questions emerge. Why is the sky that reddish color tonight? Why didn't my husband come home? Why was I born? This second level of the human spirit is known by its *questioning for understanding*. Relentless in its probing, the consciousness searches through questioning. Its inquiry leads to "Aha!" moments when bits of images connect into insights, and insights fuse to form concepts, and concepts fuse to form ideas.

The consciousness shifts again in its empirical operations as we identify a third level of operation. The questions change. Are my bright

ideas *right* ideas? Am I onto what is really true? Have I reached the truth of what really is? The consciousness, like a laser, scans all the insights gathered. If no further questions present themselves, a tentative conclusion is made and a *judgment of the truth* of the matter is reached. In a court case the prosecuting attorney presents the evidence and questions the defendant. The jury considers the facts. A *judgment* is then made by the jury, and it is the judge who executes the judgment. What is crucial in tracing intentionality is the realization that knowing is reached only at the point of judgment, not at the levels of experience or inquiry. Knowing consists of three functions: attentiveness to data, inquiry for understanding, and the judgment that the understanding is correct. But the human spirit is not only made for knowing. It is made for decision and action. The human spirit has a fourth level of operation.

Again the psychic energy, now conscious, shifts in its operations. As though choreographed by some unseen dance coach, a new form of questioning emerges. This time it is not a question of fact, of truth. (We have already discovered the facts in the judgment, and until new data should appear and the pattern sets about repeating itself, the judgment arrived at becomes our position.) The question now becomes, what difference does it make? What's it worth to you? Knowledge of the facts is one thing. Value is another. Back to the court scene. How will amends be made for this crime? What is a fitting penalty? A judgment of *value* is sought. The human spirit is moving into the level of *evaluation*, and it is from value, from worth, that the human makes a choice. This final level of human operation, the fourth, is the level where *willing* goes on. It is the level of responsible choice, decision, and action.

A Functional Perspective

Charting our intentionality offers us a *functional* explanation of the operations of the human spirit. Why is this important, and what will it mean to a study of spirituality? It is important because function is empirical and the scientific mind cannot disregard it. Empirical function is the doorway through which the human can be explored psychologically, socially, and spiritually, as well as religiously. Interiority analysis suggests that consciousness functions differently through identifiable sets of human operations. These operations clarify what human *knowing* really is and when it is reached, and what human *willing* is and when we are engaged in it. Perhaps most of all, the *self-appropriation* that results

from charting our intentionality reveals what a developed *conscience* actually is—a human consciousness operating on the fourth level of operation and aware that it is responsible for the choices it makes. We may begin to understand better what “having full knowledge and full choice” might really mean regarding moral responsibility.

With this bare sketch, we can now sum up the anthropology we have begun. The human consists of an *organism* made up of complex systems that are mutually interdependent. The human consists of a powerful *psychic energy field*, which stores images, releases those images in dreams, and releases emotions when these “energy motors” are aroused through the functions of the organism or the operations of the human spirit. The human consists of a distinctly *human spirit* with levels of operation that can be empirically identified as “experiencing,” “understanding,” “judging,” and “deciding.” The human organism, plus the psychic energy that pulsates within it, is what we are defining here as “body.” The human spirit, with its operations of knowing and choosing plus the psychic energy that becomes conscious in these operations, is what we will identify as “soul.” Psychic energy is present in both the bodily organism and the human spirit, acting as a bridge and a unifier. The human is a composite of spirit and matter. We are an embodied spirit, a spiritual embodiment.

The Soul as Measure of the Culture

In the not too distant past, the Christian researcher too quickly damned the scientific and rational viewpoint as destructive of faith. Those wiser knew better than to disclaim science and reason. The marvel of the human spirit and its search for the facts calls us to seek the truth—the real as known by the mind. The science of the brain must be given its full due. What does this mean? For one thing, it means that neurological and brain science must be taken seriously. For another, sound self-appropriation that reclaims the contemplative wonder in our awareness needs to be taken just as seriously. We have before us a challenge. The false dichotomy between science and spirituality/religion needs to be laid to rest, and effort must be made to push the questions until they yield both scientific and theological truth. One or the other is no longer enough. The brain is not the mind. The brain is the mind’s physiological infrastructure.

There is no magic “how to” to this project. Nor does it depend on some “facts out there.” If the operations of the subject, the thinker,

are not attended to, there remains only a potpourri of viewpoints with little or no accountability. Truth seeking rests on the authenticity of the truth seekers and on how ready and willing they are to give an account of their own intelligent operations. Facts clearly in our faces can be bent to suit our agendas. The thinker can cheat. The operator of the mind needs to be held accountable for his or her findings. The thinker, in science and in theology, needs to face up to bias. The human being needs to be an authentic soul-self. Such a self is the person capable of self-knowledge and accountability not only personally but communally and socially. Intentionality charting of one's interiority can be of service to provide credibility in this venture.

We have defined "soul" as the human psyche become conscious in the distinct operations of the human spirit. Charting of intentionality would have the operations of both named, known, and accounted for. We also suggest that the organism, in this case the brain, *mediates* the functions of the human spirit and the powerful energy of the psyche with its images. The brain mediates the operations of the operator, the human subject, as it communicates with the rest of reality. With interiority analysis we have a modest beginning account of what empirical functions belong properly to the human spirit, just as science has revealed the functions of the human organism and specifically of the brain.

The attempt we have made to redefine the soul and body in terms of the functions of organism, psyche, and spirit offers an empirical possibility to the sciences to ground religious experience. This grounding allows us to pose the question of how faith functions. The human spirit and its operations are natural and constitutive of the human being. The human is thus "spiritual" by nature. How then do grace and faith function in this humanness? What do they add? Because the human is naturally spiritual, even prior to any explicit religious identification, the operation of the human in its relatedness to the environment and cosmos is a spiritual issue. It may not be a religious issue for some. The philosophy of science can only point to the plausibility of the questions of an Ultimate Reality. If the question of God is unavoidable, the attempts to answer the question are clearly multiple. For example, the study of religion and its many forms is the study of how the spiritual human being expresses its relationship to Ultimate Reality. Such religious study need not presume a faith relationship with the Divine and thus is called "religious studies." The discipline that deals with Ultimate Reality as that reality that is related to the human in *faith* is theology.

For too long theology has been disconnected from cosmic moorings. This connection anchors the human and gives it a voice and choice for the ongoing shaping of matter in the universe. The human spirit as we have explained it is the seat of the intelligence and choice that will decide our future or, more radically, determine whether we will even have one. The operative functions of the human spirit—experiencing, understanding, judging, and choosing—provide the entry point for the influence of the Divine. But whether or not this divine influence is admitted, human operations, operating poorly or well, will determine the future of cultures. Can we afford the continued isolation of the human bent on being accountable to no one? What are the interdisciplinary links we need to shape an adequate study of spirituality?

The Relational Links

What is spirituality? Is it religion? Is it holiness? Does it have anything at all to do with science? These questions from the man and woman on the street press us to clarify terms we bandy about, often unsure of what we mean by them. It is clear from our approach to the soul as a natural component of the human, distinguished from the organism by certain operations, that we are referring to something radically human, not divine. True, the human person is *deified*¹¹ in the very substance of its operations as it comes more and more under the influence of the Divine. But it behooves us to understand what it is that will be transformed. Human relationship with the Divine describes *holiness* and the unfolding of how grace, virtue, and the gifts of the Spirit bring that holiness about. Spirituality is the real presence of the human, in its conscious operations, mediating that presence to the rest of reality. The intentional nurturing of the human spirit can be called “spiritual development” in contrast to “human development,” of which it is a part, for human development would include the unfolding of the organism and the psychic/emotional life of the human person. *Christian* spirituality is that real presence directly influenced by the person and life of Jesus, the Christ. One has a spirituality by simply being human, no matter how deformed, reformed, or transformed that presence to the world may be. One has a spirituality and may or may not have a

¹¹ This term, originating in Eastern Orthodoxy, is used by Daniel Helminiak in a discussion of the theotic viewpoint held by believers (*Religion and the Human Sciences: An Approach via Spirituality* [New York: SUNY, 1998], 124ff.).

religion. A religion is an organized system marked by a distinct creed, code, and cult. The religion can be corrupt or healthy. The role of religion is to support and nourish human spirituality so that the human can make the choices needed to move the culture forward.

If spirituality is the way one is present in the world, then what is the relationship of spirituality to morality? Morality is the outer behavioral manifestation of one's spirituality. Morality is one piece with spirituality. Touch one, and you have touched the other. The beauty of human spirituality will be known by the moral choices one makes. The struggle to make morally responsible choices, the choices of an authentic human being, reveals the beauty of one's spirituality. Spirituality may manifest, or keep hidden and implicit, a deep faith relationship with the Divine. What one *sees* is often *not* what one gets.

A Blessed Accountability

What we have attempted here is an overview of reclaiming and redefining the human soul in a way that might be intelligible to the human and to the natural sciences. However, knowing is not enough. Consciousness presses toward the “so what,” the *value* of rethinking what the human is—and more, what we as thinking humans intend to do about it. What difference does it make to know *how* I function as an organism/psyche/spirit?

The answer summons us to become an active partner in our own spiritual development. What we as human beings know and what we do about what we know matters. We are not an island. As we become more and more humanly authentic, the culture progresses. As we make choices influenced by bias, the culture declines. Nothing is left untouched, unchanged, or neutral. We are watching human culture change around us daily through the choices we and others make. We are poised in the humanity of our little lives to add our choices to the whole. In our science and in our theology, we stand accountable. In our homes, our parishes, our communities, our nations, our cultures, our universe, we will be measured. Such is our freedom. Such is our dignity. Out of these we shape the future. What might this shaping mean? If reclaiming our souls is the first step, how does the quality of our human authenticity transform culture?

Measuring the Culture

Culture is shaped by the meanings and values of human beings in a distinct environment. Contrary to the past, when the Christian European culture was presupposed as normative, today cultural anthropologists point out that a culture is shaped by human beings who intend meaning and who treasure distinct values that shape decision. Culture is spoken of today in the plural, the Western Christian European culture being one in the midst of cultures that are African, Indonesian, Korean, and Latino/a, to name but a few.

If culture is shaped by what human beings mean and value, then the culture, wherever it is found, can be measured by the quality of what people intend and the values people safeguard. If taking a life in your culture is murder and means you are to be executed, life for the people who practice such capital punishment is regarded basically as a physical reality with physical consequences. You take a life, you give yours. In such a culture, those for whom life means more than mere physical existence and who therefore oppose capital punishment are regarded as soft, pandering to criminals. It is the *meaning* accepted by those in power in the culture that will determine the practice. The culture would be transformed if the meaning of life as much more than physical were to be considered and intended. When human life is understood also as psychospiritual, capable of change, repentance, and forgiveness, its *meaning* has changed, and the value placed on human life, even that of the murderer, is heightened. When this meaning and value shift, so does the culture shift.

This understanding brings a proportion to our sense that “this is just the way it is.” No, it isn’t just the way it is. It is the way we *decide* it will be. The habit of smoking in America is one example. Twenty years ago the naysayers were loud in their claims that nothing would change our nicotine addiction in society. As the scientific data became clearer and clearer, the *meaning* and consequences of what smoking does to human health raised the consciousness of Americans significantly. As awareness grew, the *value* of smoking plunged. Now tobacco companies have been sued for influencing cigarette addiction through advertising. There is *value* today in the fact that people have been able to stop smoking. Laws have now been passed to prohibit smokers from infecting others in public places. The reversal is amazing. It is changing the culture.

A similar process is going on with the meaning of war and violence. The media has helped the peoples of the world come to terms

with the truth of war. The result is a change in what war *means* today. Because its violence is no longer glorified, its *value* is suspect. War is fast becoming globally unacceptable for the resolution of conflict. In both these examples, cultures are changing as a result of these changes in meaning and value.

When a human being functions, whether in worship or in government, the operations of understanding and intent create meaning. That meaning will in turn influence what is valued. Religion has a powerful role in the culture that houses it. It influences what being human means. It is not only culture that must be measured. Religion in its deformed manifestations can betray the culture that hosts it. Waco, Jonestown, and Heaven's Gate are modern examples. So religion too must be ready to be accountable. Both must come before the bar of authentic human assessment in community. What are basic human rights? Who is entitled to them? The answers to these questions must be sought without bias as much as possible. Adequate answers will be given only from a sound critique of our present cultural practice and the support religion gives to those practices.

Thematizing how the human empirically arrives at meaning and value would give us the anthropological foundation for the transformation of culture. Religious inner transformation is referred to as "conversion," and conversion has everything to do with spirituality. Authentic human accountability empowered by genuine religion is in the business of soul making, and the quality of that soul will be the measure of the culture, for better or worse.

Summary

1. The term "soul" has become ambiguous and unclear in common usage. If the term is to be useful today, "soul" needs to be redefined *functionally* in terms of human operations and human consciousness.

2. The first axial shift is the global realization that individuals, through their ability to think, can exert reasonable control over natural forces and can be held responsible for their moral behavior. The second axial shift is the gradual, growing realization in our own time that no amount of control of natural forces assures human security without an accountability for the *operations of human consciousness* that culminate in human choices. This shift can be identified as an attentiveness to *philosophic interiority*.

3. Philosophic interiority is the thematic objectification of the operations of the human subject. Such objectification requires a careful attentiveness to one's own conscious operations. Identification of one's own operations is called "interiority analysis." It is done by the empirical observation of one's own intent, or *intentionality*.

4. The anthropology needed for interiority analysis is one that includes a charting of human consciousness. An adequate anthropology needs to be grounded in the *observation* of the operations of the human consciousness, as well as the *identification* and grouping of them according to similarity or *levels* (e.g., experiencing, understanding, judging, and deciding). Empirical identification of one's own operations is called "self-appropriation."

5. If the operations of human consciousness can be empirically observed through interiority analysis, and if an account of one's intent can be thematized, resulting in self-appropriation, then we, in the *decisions* made in this process, become responsible for the *progress or decline of cultures*. What has been neglected can be attended to, and what has been in excess can be altered. *Intent* in world affairs can no longer be ignored.